the pattadar raised an illegal construction on the land, because of which the case filed was withdrawn in 1997 and the Board was granted permission for filing Suit of Ejectment under Section 40 of the Punjab Tenancy Act. The matter is presently subjudice.

(c) and (d) Officials, posted in the Faridabad Circle of Punjab Wakf Board at that time, who did not initiate legal action in time, are responsible for this. Departmental inquiry was initiated against three officials of the Board in these cases. Subsequently the matter is being inquired into by a three-Member Committee.

More Facilities for Linguistic minorities

1928. SHRI DAWA LAMA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would define 'minority' in the Constitution;

(b) whether Government would public list of linguistic minorities; State-wise; and

(c) whether Government propose to give more facilities to linguistic minorities who are also socio-economically backward?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) The question as to who constitutes a minority is sub-judice under a writ Petition in the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Further action on this will be taken on the basis of the decision of the Supreme Court.

(b) and (c) Information on Linguistic Minorities has been published in the 1991 Census Report by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. The linguistic Minorities are being provided facilities under various ongoing scheme/programmes.

Maltreated Widows in Vrindaban and Varanasi

1929. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether widows residing in Vrindaban and Varanasi are being maltreated; and

(b) if so, the action proposed to assist/enable them to live a life of dignity with human rights?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: (a) According to the information furnished by the Department of Women & Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development who are concerned with this subject matter, they have received a report on the widows in Vrindavan prepared by UP State Social Welfare Advisory Board and also an interim report on the widows of Vrindavan prepared by the West Bengal Women Commission from the State of West Bengal. Both these reports have observed that the widows of Vrindavan who have to depend on alms as the support provided by the Bhajanshrams and charitable institutions which is not sufficient.

(b) The Department of Women & Child Development has set up a Committee under the Chairpersonship of Minister of State for Women & Child Development to co-ordinate the efforts of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal Governments and Central Government organizations for rehabilitation of the marginalized women of Vrindavan and to monitor flow of benefits of Central Schemes to the target group. Besides, there are various Central Government Schemes for self employment for women such as Setting up of Employment-cum-Income Generating Units for Women (NORAD), Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP), Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY), Socio-Economic Programme (SEP), Condensed Courses of Educational & Vocational Training for Women (CC&VT) under which preference is given to such marginalized women in the matter of providing assistance. The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh is also implementing programmes, with special focus on marginalized women under which financial assistance is provided for implementing self employment programmes through Non-Governmental Organisations. Other schemes such as National Old Age Pension Scheme and the Social Defence Schemes provide for pension and rehabilitation of such aged and marginalized women. As regards the question of widows in Varanasi, that Department has no information to furnish.

Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has released grant-in-aid of Rs. 5.82 lakhs during 1998-99 to Guild of Service, a voluntary organisation working for women in need, for implementing a project for the rehabilitation of widows of Vrindavan by providing them shelter, food, means of living, vocational training etc. Another grant of Rs. 14.04 lakhs has-been sanctioned during the current financial year (1999-2000), 50% of which amounting of Rs. 7.02 lakhs has been released in October, 1999.